Building a Biotech Venture

PROGRAM APPLICATION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Building a Biotech Venture is a program for regenerative and precision medicine-focused graduate students, postdocs and research associates in labs at the University of Toronto (U of T) and its affiliated hospitals, which aims to support the next generation of researchers as they take their first steps toward translating their research into a product or venture. The BBTV program is being led this year by the [Precision Medicine Initiative (PRiME)](https://www.prime.utoronto.ca/) in close partnership with [Medicine by Design](https://mbd.utoronto.ca/), [Health Innovation Hub (H2i)](https://h2i.utoronto.ca/), and [Talk Boutique](https://talkboutique.com/).

The Building a Biotech Venture Program occurs in two phases:

* **Venture Development** – Ten teams will develop their ventures with guidance and training through mentorship and workshop programing.
* **Pitch Competition** – Teams will receive pitch coaching and compete in a pitch competition to a panel of industry experts. Teams accepted into the Venture Development phase of the program are eligible to participate in the Pitch Development phase but **will need to submit a separate application** by March 18, 2025.

In the **Venture Development** phase of this program, teams will develop their venture concepts, create a pitch deck and business canvas, and set milestones for building their company. All teams admitted into the program will be matched with a mentor, who will provide ongoing guidance over the course of the program. Teams will also receive additional dedicated mentorship opportunities through registration into the H2i accelerator, from [H2i Director, Paul Santerre](https://h2i.utoronto.ca/mentor/paul-santerre/), and additional H2i mentors/resources as per the needs of the ventures for their given stage of development. The program will include the following workshops run by industry experts to help teams in scaling their ventures and prepare them for the pitch competition:

* **Workshop 1: Developing a Business Canvas** (February 13, 2-4:30pm)
* **Workshop 2: Intellectual Property** (February 20, 3-5:00pm)
* **Workshop 3: Preclinical Experimental Derisking** (February 27, 3-4:30pm)
* **Workshop 4: Clinical Translation and Regulatory Affairs** (March 6, 3-4:30pm)
* **Workshop 5: Early-Stage Investment** (March 13, 3-4:30pm)
* **Workshop 6: Pitching and Presentation Skills** (March 20, 3-4:30pm)

Six teams will be accepted to present to a panel of entrepreneurs and industry experts at the pitch competition on **May 8, 2025.** Ahead of the pitch, venture finalists will have access to group communications coaching and one-on-one coaching through Talk Boutique and additional H2i mentorship sessions to refine their presentations. The winning team will receive $25,000 **(sponsored by** [**Precision Medicine Initiative (PRiME)**](https://www.prime.utoronto.ca/) **&** [**Medicine by Design**](https://mbd.utoronto.ca/)**)** in research funding to advance their venture. The research funding must be spent in a lab at U of T or its affiliated hospitals, with funding held by team member’s principal investigator.

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To apply to the program, teams must submit a one-page business canvas outlining their venture concept. The application documents are provided on page 3.

Fill in the one-pager business canvas the best you can at this stage of the application. The objective of Building a Biotech Venture is to help you build out your venture concept so that this document will be more developed and refined by the end of the program.

ELIGIBILITY

* Proposed product or venture concept must have an application to regenerative and/or precision medicine (see definitions in section 3)
* The recommended team size is 3 - 5 people. Although the program is primarily for trainees, principal investigators may be members of a team.
* Each team must have **at least one team member** whose current supervisor has a faculty appointment at U of T or one of its affiliated hospitals. This PI must be willing to hold funding on behalf of the team should they receive funding through the pitch competition.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Application will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

* The product concept is relevant to the field of regenerative medicine and/or precision medicine;
* The product concept addresses an unmet clinical need; and
* The product concept has potential for commercialization.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION:

The University of Toronto recognizes that diversity is essential to the creation of a vibrant intellectual community that allows our researchers to maximize their creativity and their contributions. Medicine by Design is therefore strongly committed to diversity in research and especially welcomes applications that engage racialized persons/persons of colour, women, Indigenous/Aboriginal Peoples of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+ persons, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

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**Application submission deadline**: January 10, 2025 at 11:59 PM

Instructions

* Complete the following Microsoft Word template and convert to a PDF document for submission.
* Email the completed document to [**prime.initiative@utoronto.ca**](mailto:prime.initiative@utoronto.ca)by**11:59 pm on January 10, 2025.** Notification of receipt will be sent within one business day.

Teams will be notified whether they have been selected to enter the program by **January 24, 2025**

Please note that all teams accepted into the program **must** register as an H2i venture, to take advantage of additional mentorship to complement the BBTV program, and gain access to financial and networking resources to move their venture forward during and beyond the Building a Biotech Venture pitch event (see <https://h2i.utoronto.ca/>)).

**Company name:**

SECTION 1: Team

*In the table below, list the members of your team.* ***At least one member of your team must currently be a trainee whose supervisor has an appointment at the University of Toronto or one of its affiliated hospitals.***

*The recommended team size is 3-5 people. If you wish to meet potential team members, please attend the* ***Building a Biotech Venture Information Session*** *on November 21, 2024, where we will have a networking session for you to meet other interested participants.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Department and Institution | Current Role  (e.g. PhD Candidate, Postdoctoral Fellow, Research Associate)) | Supervisor | Role in Team | Email |
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SECTION 2: Company Business Canvas

Fill in whatever you can at this stage of your venture development. The objective of Building a Biotech Venture is to help you build out your venture concept so that this document will be more developed and refined by the end of the program.

**Logo (if available)**

Company Name:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Company Overview** | **Tagline** (one sentence catchphrase identifying yourproduct or company) |
| **Founder/Co-founders:**    **Year Established:**    **No. of Employees:**    **Management Team:**  **Scientific Advisors:**  **Business Advisors:** |  |
| **Problem** |
|  |
| **Solution** |
|  |
| **Market Opportunity** |
|  |
| **Competitive Advantage** |
|  |
| **Milestones** |
|  |
| **Optional: Go-to-Market and/or Business Model and/or Technology Development Plan** |
|  |

SECTION 3: Regenerative and/or Precision Medicine Application

##### Briefly describe the application of your technology to the field of regenerative medicine and/or precision medicine. Please reference the definitions of regenerative and precision medicine below. *(Max 250 words)*

##### ***Definition of Regenerative Medicine***

*Medicine by Design has a broad perspective on the definition of regenerative medicine. The field includes the use of stem cells (or their derivatives) to replace diseased tissues and organs, creating therapies in which cells are the biological product. Regenerative medicine can also mean triggering stem cells that are already present in the human body to repair damaged tissues or to modulate immune responses. This approach is often referred to as endogenous repair and can include novel small molecules and/or biologic candidates, as well as biomaterials. Increasingly, regenerative medicine researchers are using a stem cell lens to identify critical interactions or defects that prepare the ground for disease, paving the way for new approaches to preventing disease before it starts. Enabling technologies such as cell manufacturing platforms and stem cell-based organ-on-chip technologies are also important aspects of the field and areas of interest to Medicine by Design.*

***Definition of Precision Medicine***

*Precision medicine is a personalized approach to prevention and treatment that tailors care to the unique genetic, biological, and environmental characteristics of each patient. Advancing precision medicine relies on interdisciplinary teams and pioneering research to develop enabling technologies. Next-generation solutions in this field use cutting-edge tools for diagnosing diseases, identifying biomarkers, understanding patient populations, and gaining deeper insights into disease biology through integrated methods from life sciences, engineering, and beyond.*

*This tailored approach shares similarities with PRiME’s vision to advance patient-specific technologies in drug discovery, combining leading-edge research with strategic partnerships to drive innovations in healthcare.*

If you have any questions about whether your venture concept fits regenerative or precision medicine, please reach out to [prime.initiative@utoronto.ca](mailto:prime.initiative@utoronto.ca).